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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 001154

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [DJ](#) [KPAO](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: THE MESSAGE IS MISSING

Classified By: CDA: REGribbin for reasons 1.5 b&d

11. (C) Summary. While most elements of the global war on terrorism are functioning well in the Horn of Africa, a key ingredient - the message in the Somali language to the people of the region - is missing. It is time to think again how to add this component to the mix. Post suggests Somali language broadcasts from the new IBB transmitting facility in Djibouti. End summary.

12. (C) As addressees are aware much effort is going into learning about and containing the bad guys in this part of the world. Those charged with that responsibility are doing well. Additionally, programs included in the East Africa Counter Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) are doing their part to improve the counter-terrorism capabilities of HOA nations. Finally under both State/USAID and military aegis, development, grass roots and humanitarian projects are winning the hearts and minds of local communities. What is missing, however, is a wider communications effort designed to bring the message of friendship, non-confrontation with Islam and peace to the masses, especially Somali speakers who are the hosts, the recruits and the supporters of inimicable elements. Secondly, we judge that as the politics of Somalia and Somaliland mature, it behooves us to be better placed to foster the evolution of the sort of governments and polices conducive to global norms. Accomplishment of this will be difficult without a better means of communication to decision makers.

13. (C) Despite the excellent public relations products produced by regional embassies and CJTF-HOA, we doubt if much American generated information gets through to Somali speakers, who are found in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia's Ogaden and Djibouti. Although Radio Sawa in Arabic now broadcasts from Djibouti, its transmissions are oriented towards the Arab world and, even though in the language of the mosques, they are largely unheard and poorly understood in the Horn of Africa. What we need is equivalent programming in the Somali language as well as the ability to tailor messages specifically to the circumstances in the Horn. We used to have some of this in VOA's Somali service. Now is the time to resurrect it if we are to have a solid chance to form attitudes in the region in a positive direction. Right now, America's absence from the radio airways concedes influence to the radicals, especially in regions where the USG has no community relations work on the ground. Let there be no doubt that our opponents capitalize on this advantage.

14. (C) We have thought about several means to rectify the situation. First, we would not be adverse to offering government controlled Radio Djibouti an hour or so per day of U.S. produced programming. Radio Djibouti can be heard in Djibouti, the Ogaden and Somaliland. We would caution that this service and the GODj would likely be reluctant to use programming that seemed to them to be too political. We cannot judge much in advance where they would draw the line, but would have a better feel for it after discussions - were we authorized to do so.

15. (C) An alternative would be to re-invigorate a daily Somali hour or two on VOA broadcasts to the region.

16. (C) A third option would be to add a Somalia aimed transmitter to the new Djibouti broadcasting facility built for Radio Sawa by IBB and from that beam programming into the Horn. This would probably require an amendment to our agreement with the GODj, but we believe that is doable. Programming for such a station would all be Washington generated and merely rebroadcast from here.

17. (C) Comment: Apparently, this crucial element of the GWOT in the Horn of Africa slipped off the screens, but with the new installation of the IBB facility in Djibouti it is time to revisit it to see what might be done to rectify the situation. Please advise.

GRIBBIN